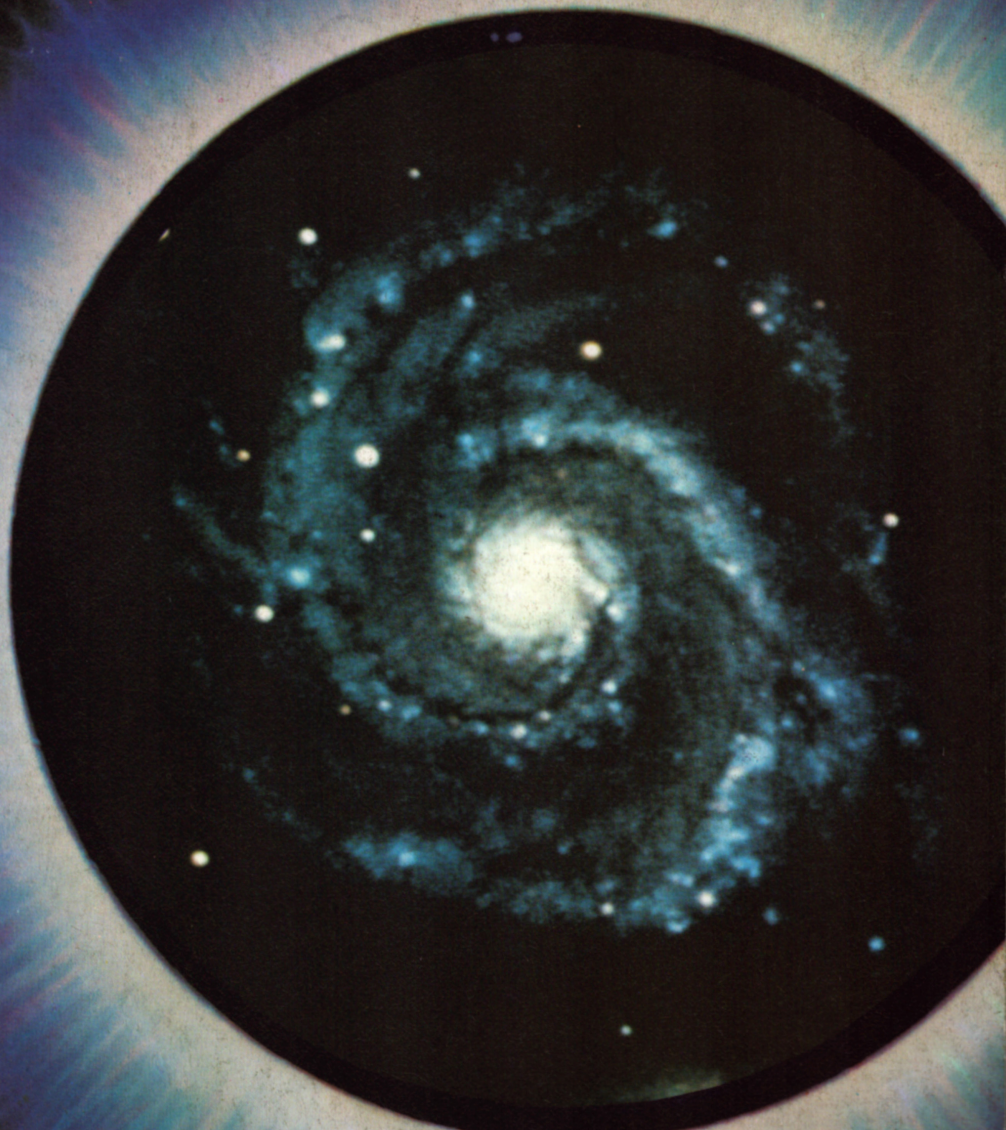
60p

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

Live burials
Sex: elixir of life?
Return of the comets
Earth's power lines
Dream dialogues

118



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THE Unexplained
MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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In next week's issue
We all have dreams, even if we can't remember them. In **Extra-sensory perception** we look at the claim of one dream group that we can learn not only to recall dreams, but also to discover their psychic components. Why are the apparently pointless – and horrifying – practices of **Live burials** undertaken? We explore the world of the holy men whose self-torture is said to lead to the utmost ecstasy. Jekyll and Hyde live . . . in **Multiple personalities** we investigate disturbing real-life cases where conflicting personalities seem to inhabit one body. Spiritualists are still indignant over the 1940s court case in which medium **Helen Duncan** was convicted of fraud – was she innocent or guilty? In **No-war prophecies** we look back on the failure of prophets and psychics to foresee the First World War – a remarkable oversight!
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The fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, in a painting by Tintoretto (1518–1594). Halley's Comet, which made one of its periodic appearances at this time, was taken to mark the event

Return of the comets

The idea that comets are portents of catastrophic events is generally derided by orthodox science. But a new theory by two British astronomers suggests that the old belief may be based on fact. PETER JAMES investigates

ONE OF MAN'S MOST ANCIENT – and seemingly universal – beliefs is the idea that comets are makers of catastrophe. While positions of planets at the birth of an individual are thought, in mundane astrology, to govern the characteristics of that person and even events in his or her life, the appearance of comets is associated with momentous and terrible happenings. The timely arrivals of Halley's Comet are well-known: its coming in AD 66 was seen by the Romans to foretell the death of Nero and by the Jews the imminent destruction of Jerusalem; in 1066 it was thought to presage bad luck for the English at the battle of Hastings; and in 1453 it appeared to mark the sack of Constantinople by the Turks. Roman literature is full of ominous references to comets – the one that was seen shortly after the Ides of March in 44 BC was thought to be a reflection of the killing of Julius Caesar. And right through the medieval period in Europe, comets were feared as signs of coming pestilence, floods or war – even the Apocalypse or Day of Judgement itself.

Comets are certainly the most wayward and surprising members of the solar system. Composed of a tiny 'head' of ice and dust, only a few miles across, they trail huge tails of incandescent dust and glowing gas when they are near the Sun. Some swoop into the centre of the solar system on vast orbits, crossing the sedate paths of the planets, then swing around the Sun to travel outwards into the depths of interstellar space, never to return. Others, 'short-period' comets such as Halley's and most of those we see from the Earth, are trapped in the gravitational field of the Sun and planets and reappear at regular intervals.

The phenomenon we see as a comet is formed when a lump of ice and dust – 'dirty snowballs', as astronomers have whimsically nicknamed them – comes close enough to the

Left: the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC. A comet was seen in the skies shortly after the event; as Shakespeare remarked in his play *Julius Caesar*, 'When beggars die, there are no comets seen;/The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes'

Sun for the ice to begin to melt. A stream of dust particles is driven away from the comet to form a glowing tail that may stretch for tens of millions of miles. The mass of the material in the tail is usually a tiny fraction of that in the almost invisible nucleus – but a relatively small comet can provide a brilliant tail as long as one 'astronomical unit', which is defined as the distance between the Earth and the Sun, some 93 million miles (150 million kilometres). Playing in the solar wind, such a tail can take on varieties of fantastic patterns and forms: curving forks, twisted horns, sword-shapes, sickles and tridents, in colours ranging from incandescent blue-white to deep bloody red.

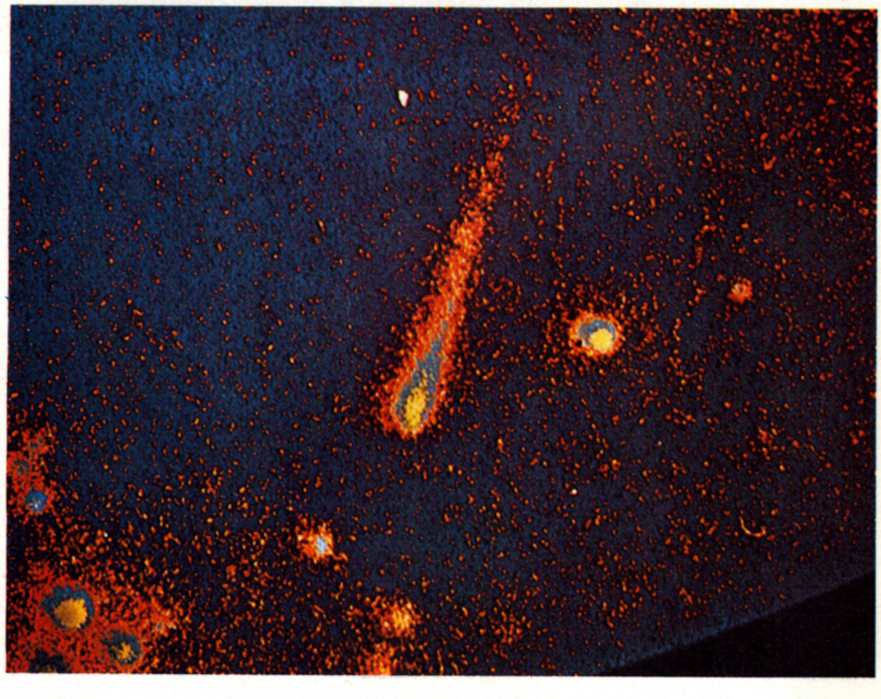
A graphic description of a comet appears in an astronomer's record of 1882:

> As the Comet rose, the widened extremity of its tail passed the zenith and seemed to overhang the world. When the dawn came, the dark blue of the sky near the point of sunrise began to change into a rich yellow, then gradually came a stronger light, and over the mountain and among the yellow, an ill-defined mass of golden glory rose, in surroundings of indescribable beauty. This was the nucleus of the comet . . . with a tail about as long as the moon is broad.

This kind of impressive and ornamental display has been seen very seldom during the 20th century. Shows such as that in 1882 can be seen only a few times a century, and our next good opportunity to do so is the return of Halley's Comet, due in 1986. Most comets are rather disappointing, as was Comet Kohoutek, which was billed as the spectacle of the century – but in the event was hardly noticed by anyone when it came close to the Earth in 1973.

Comets can be breathtakingly beautiful, fascinating and perhaps awesome – but viewed objectively they are transient, hardly terrifying, phenomena. In historical time there are no records of comets having caused direct damage on Earth. But why, then, have they evoked such unreasonable fear across the ages? The works of Shakespeare are replete with doom-laden images of 'comets, importing changes of time and states'. And as recently as 1858, London eyewitnesses to the dazzling Donati's Comet spent the night in panic, fearing that the world was about to come to an end.

It is tempting to put this overblown fear of comets down to pure superstition, based on ignorance. But is this really the case? Is it possible that mankind has some kind of deep memory of a time when comets were not as



A computer-enhanced photograph of Comet Kohoutek, which passed close to the Earth in 1973. It is easy to see how the spectacular appearance of many comets led to the belief that they were somehow connected with cataclysmic events – but it is some time since such a comet has passed close to the Earth. Comet Kohoutek is a case in point: astronomers predicted that it would be a dominant feature of the night sky – but it was barely visible to the naked eye

harmless as they are today?

Similar issues were, of course, dealt with by Immanuel Velikovsky (see page 1181). But two British astronomers, Dr Victor Clube and Dr Bill Napier, have put forward a new theory that tackles a staggering range of apparently unrelated enigmas in the Earth's history – from the death of the dinosaurs and origins of the asteroid belt to the significance of Stonehenge and the true meaning of astrology. They claim to have demonstrated that at regular, and datable, periods in the past the Earth has been assailed and devastated by swarms of comets. These periodic catastrophes have not only shaped the Earth's geological and biological evolution, but have decisively influenced the religious and intellectual life of Man.

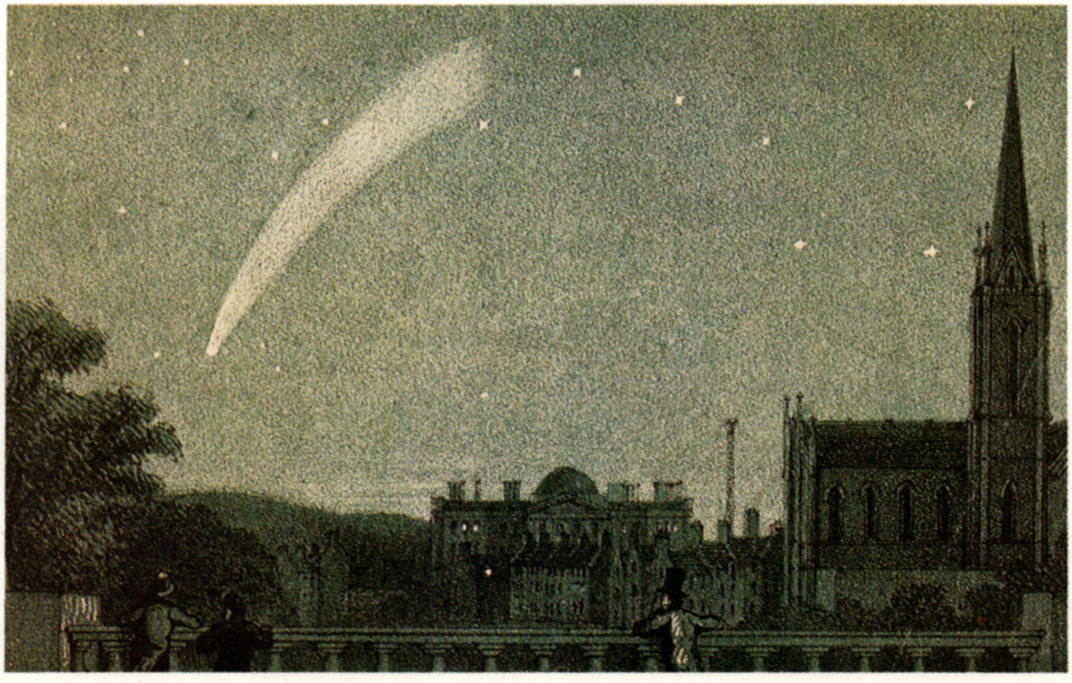
Above: this scene from the Bayeux tapestry shows the appearance of a portentous 'star' – Halley's Comet; at the time, it was believed to presage bad luck for the English army

The results of their research into cometary history were published as a book in the summer of 1982 under the title *The cosmic serpent*. (The dragon, they argue, is simply early Man's way of describing the snake-like appearance of comets.) They make an impassioned plea for the recognition of the importance of comets – which are, they say, both the heroes and villains of the world's prehistory. The authors are aware that they encroach on the ground of many scientific disciplines – it is certainly true that, as they mischievously announce in the introduction, 'There is something here to outrage everyone.' While some of their endeavours – for instance, their attempt to revise the dates of Egyptian history – may be over-ambitious, the central core of their theory is a cleanly argued and logical outcome from the problems posed by modern astronomical research. As they freely admit, not much of it is really new – the possibility of comet-caused catastrophes has been toyed with for at least 300 years. But only recently have enough data been assembled to form a plausible hypothesis.

Hard facts and unorthodoxy

Dr Clube and Dr Napier are both scientists at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh – internationally recognised astronomers with, between them, over 100 papers published in scientific books and journals. Since 1970 they have been studying comets – their composition, origins and behaviour. While the overall picture they paint seems somewhat unorthodox, the individual pieces of the puzzle are composed of the hard facts of 20th-century astronomical discovery.

Their study begins with the mystery of the extraordinary over-abundance of comets. There are at present estimated to be *several thousand million* comets associated with the



Right: Donati's Comet as it appeared in the skies above London on 4 October 1858. Londoners spent the night in panic, many of them convinced that the world was about to end

solar system – but in terms of the currently accepted theory of the origins of comets, this is *far too many*.

In 1950, a Dutch astronomer, Sigismund Oort, demonstrated from an examination of the orbits of comets that they originated from a ring or cloud of comets at the farthest edge of the solar system. This 'Oort cloud', as it is now known, is usually thought to have formed at the same time as the rest of the Sun's family – some 4.5 billion years ago. But as Clube and Napier point out, the solar system is constantly losing comets, some of which wander off into deep space, while others are boiled away by the heat of the Sun into streams of dust. At the rate we lose them, calculations show that the Oort cloud 'would by now have been devastated, whittled down to a rump a fraction the size we now observe'.

Where do all the comets in the Oort cloud come from? The obvious conclusion, as Clube and Napier show, is that rather than being 'born' together with the rest of the solar system, our cometary siblings come from outside it.

Our Galaxy is a gigantic spiral structure, a whirling spray of stars that rotates around a common centre. The Sun, one of the oldest stars in the Galaxy, moves slowly through successive arms of the spiral, crossing a new one roughly every 50 million years. Here in these arms, Clube and Napier have discovered, is an ideal source for the periodic 'topping up' of the Oort cloud with cometary material. In between the stars, what were once thought to be empty gulfs or holes in the spiral arms have been revealed by radio-telescopes to be vast freezing dust clouds of inconceivable immensity.

These interstellar clouds dwarf the stars and are easily the largest objects in the Galaxy. Whereas astronomers had previously imagined that the Sun would glide peacefully through the void of interstellar space when traversing a spiral arm, a totally different picture emerges when the existence of these dust clouds – sometimes condensed into supercomets – is taken into account. Violent interactions would be inevitable. The gravitational pull of the interstellar cloud would tear away our previous comets, but at the same time provide us with a fresh influx of cometary material.

Clube and Napier have used mathematics to construct a model of exactly what would happen. It seems that roughly every 50 million years, when the Sun passes through another arm of the Galaxy, the solar system would be flooded with comets of all sizes. Gradually the number of comets would dwindle until a new spiral arm is reached and the process would begin again. The effect on the solar system of these periodic saturations of comets would be devastating.

Comets are not, as *Hutchinson's encyclopedia* would have it, 'completely harmless'. There is no reason why they should not

Above: the Whirlpool Galaxy, which, like our own, is clearly a spiral galaxy. For reasons that are not yet completely understood, stars move in and out of the arms of the spiral; in our Galaxy, the Sun passes through a spiral arm roughly once every 50 million years. In *The cosmic serpent*, Dr Victor Clube and Dr Bill Napier suggest that the passage of the Sun through the spiral arm causes a huge influx of comets into the solar system. These, in turn, could cause catastrophic events on Earth

Right: St George kills the dragon, in an anonymous medieval altar painting. Clube and Napier argue that dragons, as they appear in the religious imagery of many cultures, are in fact representations of comets

strike the Earth; this may, indeed, have happened at Tunguska, Siberia, in 1908 (see page 1030). Probably only a small fragment of a comet about 110 yards (100 metres) across fell, but its impact raised a column of fire 12 miles (20 kilometres) high, charring trees up to a radius of 45 miles (70 kilometres) and knocking people unconscious within a 60-mile (100-kilometre) radius, in an explosion around the order of 100 megatonnes. A comet or asteroid about half a mile (1 kilometre) wide, at a typical speed of 80,000 miles per hour (130,000 km/h), would hit the Earth with the force of a 3 million megatonne bomb. (For comparison, the Hiroshima explosion was a *fiftieth* of a megatonne.) Such an impact could boil seas, raise global dust clouds and drastically alter climate. Searing heat, the force of the blast, tidal waves and cyanide from the comet's tail would annihilate any life-forms within range, and impose a new environment on those who managed to escape the immediate effects.

The death of the dinosaurs

Clube and Napier's theory clearly fits neatly with the conclusions being reached by some geologists about the mysterious disappearance of the dinosaurs some 63 million years ago. In the rock stratum laid down in the period marking the boundary between the age of the dinosaurs and the following period of mammals, geologists have discovered on a world-wide scale anomalous amounts of the element iridium. While iridium is rare on the Earth it is abundant in comets and meteorites. So perhaps the extinction of the dinosaurs was caused by the impact of a massive comet or meteorite.

The time-scale here is all important. The last passage of the Sun through a spiral arm of the Galaxy took place about 10 million years ago. The previous one would have occurred around 60 million years ago, strikingly close to the time of the dinosaur extinction. Clube and Napier can also point to a more general correlation with the 50-million-year encounters between the solar system and spiral arms. The interval between the major geological ages since life began is around 50 million years – and at the ends of these ages we find other biological extinctions, changes in sea level and climatic upheavals. *The cosmic serpent* postulates a single cause for all these catastrophes.

If Clube and Napier are right, it is comets that shaped the early history of the Earth. If their theory stopped there, we might feel tempted to say that the superstitions of the ancients were somehow vindicated – that our ancestors had intuitively sensed the devastating potential now shown by science to be stored in the comet. But the story of cometary origins and major geological changes is just one aspect of Clube and Napier's theory; in many ways, it is little more than a summing up of the most recent discoveries of orthodox science about the nature of the solar system and the succession of the geological ages.

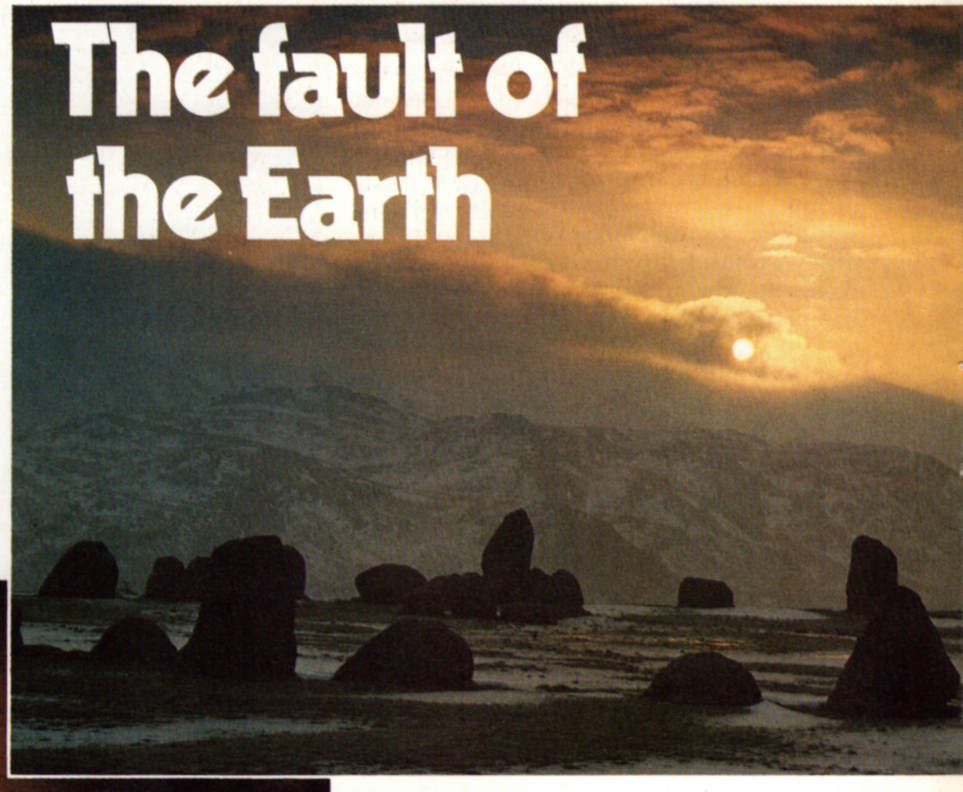
But it is another point of their theory that has proved the most controversial: Clube and Napier feel that they have proof that, within the past 5000 years, Man himself witnessed – and survived – cometary catastrophes.

Does ancient mythology contain any hints of comet impacts? See page 2394

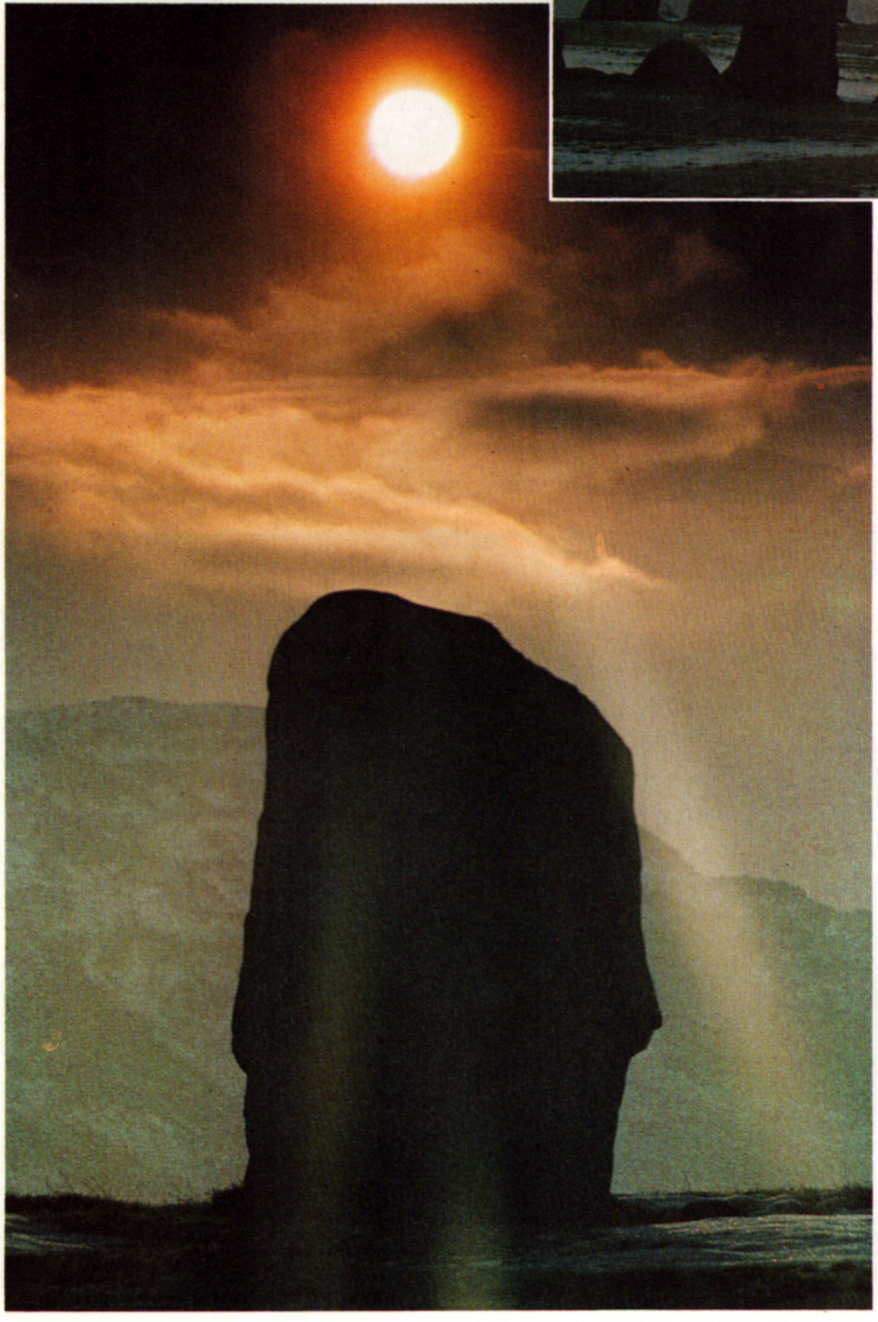
An artist's impression of one possible way in which the dinosaurs could have become extinct. Many writers have suggested that comet fragments were responsible for the catastrophe that wiped them out; Immanuel Velikovsky, in particular, believed that the comet concerned later became the planet Venus. Clube and Napier's theory, however, suggests an origin for the comet that is perhaps more plausible: 63 million years ago, when the dinosaurs became extinct, the Sun was entering a spiral arm of the galaxy, and a number of comets may have entered the solar system

The fault of the Earth

Scientific research suggests that UFOs seen near stone circles may be produced by the energy of the Earth itself. PAUL DEVEREUX examines the terrestrial forces that may connect sacred sites with seismic activity, electromagnetic fields – and the incidence of UFOs

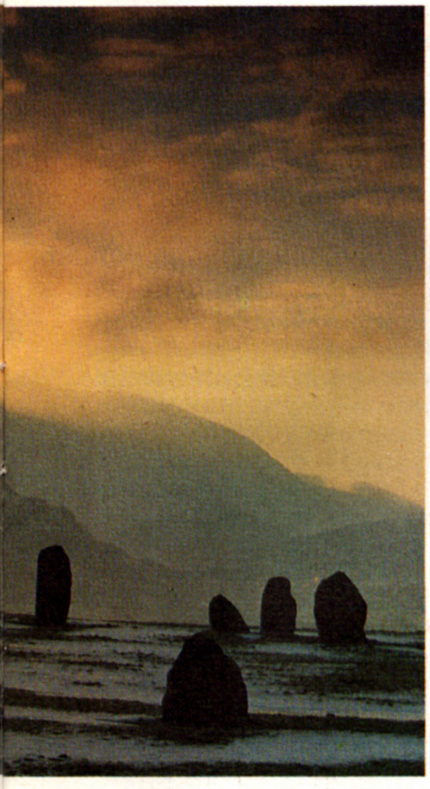


A BELIEF EXISTS that standing stones mark places of power; evidence to support it comes from folklore, geomancy, dowsing, the response of psychics to such sites and scientific research by specialists. The British Dragon Project (see page 1598), in particular, has since late 1977 been investigating many of these types of evidence at ancient sites. Its findings regarding the geological aspects of the distribution of stone circles are beginning to suggest that there may have been a geophysical dimension to the siting of these ancient holy places and that there may be common factors linking some types of megalithic site with the unusual atmospheric phenomena we call UFOs.



As long ago as 1969 John Michell suggested that stone circles were located in geological fault regions. This, however, was only a 'hunch', and it was not until 1982 that research by geologist Paul McCartney confirmed Michell's suspicion. Britain is an ideal 'laboratory' for such investigation because not only does it have a rich heritage of stone monuments, but it also has an extraordinarily wide range of landscapes of different geological types, all crammed into one small island. The country has undergone a number of mountain-building periods – orogenies – and the landscape has been scarred, fractured, and in some cases overlaid with sedimentary deposits, only to be scarred by subsequent orogenies. The most recent mountain-building episode to leave a really major mark on the British landscape was the Armorican orogeny, which took place about 300 million years ago. It is the pre-Armorican rocks that took the brunt of the disturbances caused by this orogeny, of course, and it is on outcrops of these that we find most of the surface faulting in the British Isles. A glance at a geological map shows that most faults occur in the north and west of Britain.

In the vicinity of faulting there is *mineral enhancement*: the minerals found within rock strata are here compressed into relatively small areas, often with metal ores of different kinds jammed into close proximity to one



Castlerigg stone circle (above and below left) in Cumbria lies in an area of geological disturbance. Most British stone circles lie near fault lines. Maps (below) show similarities in the distribution of highly faulted pre-Armorican rocks (left), stone circles (centre) and areas of mineral enhancement, which tends to create local variations in the magnetic field (right). Can this close resemblance be mere coincidence?

another. Different metals have different magnetic values, and it is in such places that we tend to find variations in local magnetism.

In the course of these primordial geological upheavals, great *intrusions* of igneous granite have been thrust through the Earth's crust. These have naturally fractured the areas around them and have therefore formed hubs of faulting, folding and general tectonic disturbance, giving the landscape its characteristic appearance.

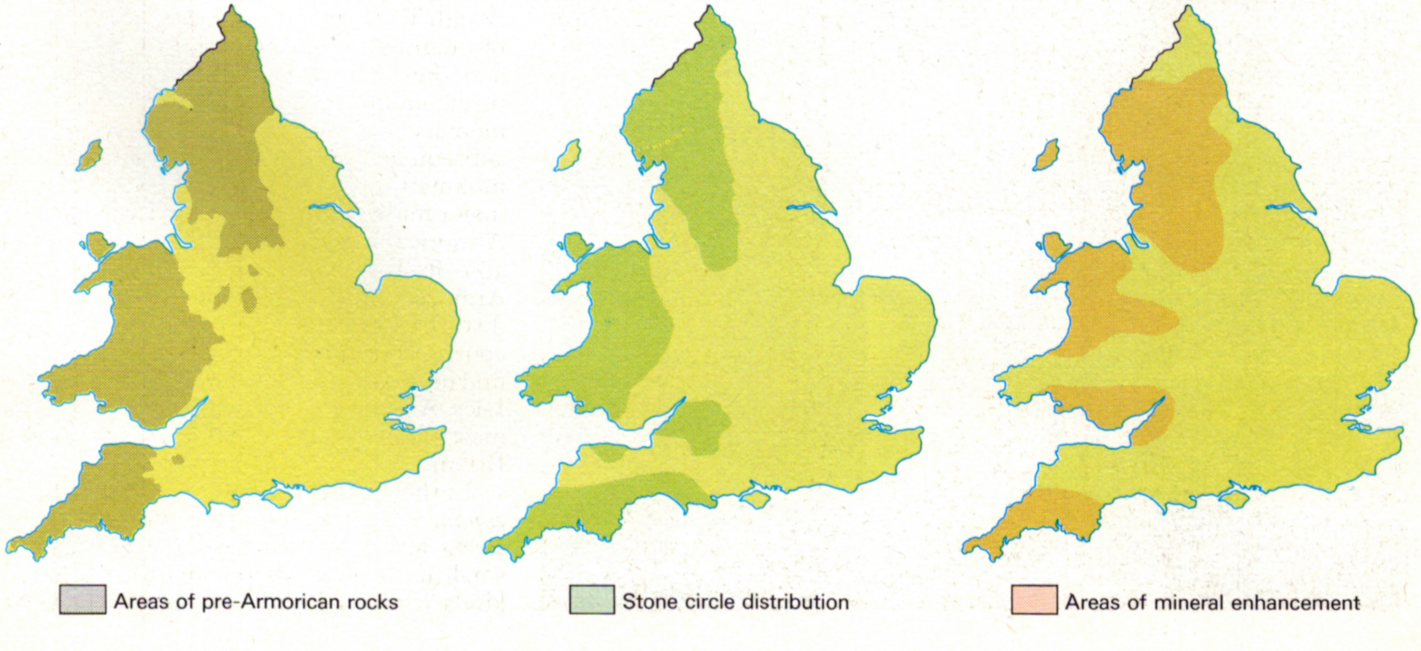
If certain megalithic sites such as stone circles are, as one theory goes, places of power, it is in geologically disturbed areas, where the energies of the Earth are likely to be at their strongest, that we would expect to find them. And so it proves. If we compare the limits of main stone circle building in England and Wales with the surface-faulted pre-Armorican rock outcrops, we see that the distribution is almost identical. The areas of mineral enhancement also follow a markedly similar distribution.

The correlation between megalithic monuments and fault lines appears to be more than a vague similarity of distribution. The Rollright circle near Oxford, for example, falls outside the main boundaries of stone circle distribution and it is not in an area where surface faulting would be expected. Yet, within about three-quarters of a mile (1.2 kilometres) of the stones, there runs a surface fault – called, appropriately enough, the Rollright Fault. This is a pattern repeated throughout England and Wales, and McCartney's research convinces him that every stone circle in those two countries lies within a mile (1.6 kilometres) of a surface fault or on an associated intrusion.

Research that has been carried out in Scotland indicates that the same principles hold for stone circle distribution there as elsewhere in the British Isles. For instance there is the Great Glen Fault, a huge, extremely ancient fissure that contains Loch Ness. Approximately 50 megalithic sites of various sorts cluster around this feature. Archaeological evidence suggests that the loch itself covers the sites of inundated stone circles. Only the group of circles in Aberdeenshire seem less closely linked to tectonic features. This is particularly interesting because these form a distinct set of sites, archaeologically speaking, characterised by having a recumbent stone in each circle. Some of the recumbent stones are exactly horizontal as measured by a spirit level. It is possible that this peculiarity is in some way related to the fact that the circles lie further from faults than do their counterparts elsewhere in the British Isles.

Places of power

Little research of this kind has been carried out outside the British Isles, but the results of a French research project provide telling confirmation and additional information. Pierre Mereaux has conducted many years' geophysical study at what is probably the world's largest megalithic complex, near Carnac in Brittany (see page 1444). Mereaux has pointed out that the thousands of stones comprising the rows of the Carnac region are located on a huge granite platform – an intrusion – that also contains magnetite, or lodestone. (This is also the case with the British circles on the great intrusions of Dartmoor, Bodmin Moor and so on.) Around the edges of this granite upland there is considerable faulting, of course, and it is an important fact that this region of Brittany is the most seismically active in the whole of France. Over the years, Mereaux has been carrying out a unique set of experiments around the Carnac stones – and the results give us a deeper insight into the geophysical reasons why megaliths are where they are. Gravitation is not constant at all places on the Earth's surface, and in specific areas there are anomalous changes in the magnitude of the



are subjected to surges of seismoelectricity resulting from the piezoelectrical effect – the current that flows when crystals in rock are subjected to pressure (see page 555). As movements in the faults take place, the granite and other rocks within the ground are pressurised, bathing the megaliths in seas of subtle electricity. We do not yet know how this may affect the standing stones in their geometrical layouts, but there is undoubtedly at least one energy input into the megaliths that might, when combined with the presence of underground water, solar radiation, lunar attraction, the presence of human energy fields and any number of other ambient electromagnetic conditions, produce various effects. These might be those enlarged upon in folk tales that tell of healing stones, divination, special meteorological effects and the presence of 'spirits' at such sites.

It is worth noting that when the Sun or Moon cross the horizon there is a 'shear force' (which acts along the ground rather than upwards, as in the tidal pull) exerted on fault lines; thus dawn and sunset are the most likely times for the delicate electromagnetic effects of otherwise quiescent tectonic features to be put into action. Precise knowledge of such geophysical mechanisms could perhaps have been the reason behind the apparent megalithic obsession with solar and lunar astronomy. Another interesting feature is that when faults move, ultrasound can be

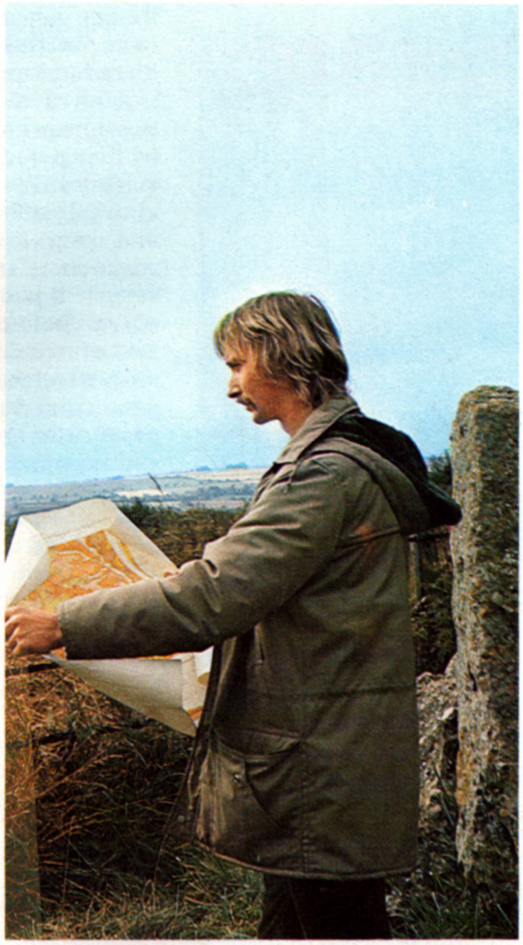
force of gravity. Mereaux has measured this force with sensitive instruments across the whole Carnac area and has shown that subtle changes in gravity certainly occur there. He has found that five of the major Carnac row complexes fall along boundaries, or interfaces, between zones of 'positive' and 'negative' gravity anomalies; that is, a coin is lighter in a negative zone on one side of a stone row, and heavier in the positive area on the other side. The difference to our normal senses is minute but, geophysically speaking, the anomalies are there. What is suspected by the French researchers, as by members of the Dragon Project, is that the megalith builders – although not aware of electromagnetism in the way in which we are – could sense changes in the Earth's fields that told them where the places of power were.

Another major finding by Mereaux is that seven of the Carnac row complexes stand precisely on the borders of an area of stable magnetic field, with an eighth row, *Vieux moulin*, placed within it. This calls to mind the magnetic anomalies recorded by Dr Balanovsky and Professor John Taylor on and around a Welsh standing stone in the mid 1970s (see page 557). It would be an unwise sceptic indeed who would attempt to dismiss all this as coincidence.

All megaliths, whether in France, Britain or elsewhere, that are located near fault lines, and particularly those on granite intrusions,

Further reading

Paul Devereux, *Earth lights*, Turnstone 1982
Paul Devereux and Ian Thomson, *The ley hunter's companion*, Thames and Hudson 1979
Francis Hitching, *Earth magic*, Picador 1976



Left: the Loanhead of Daviot near Aberdeen is one of a number of circles in the area, each incorporating a recumbent level stone. Unusually, the area is not one of seismic disturbance: elsewhere, as geologist Paul McCartney (right) has established, megalithic sites are generally associated with geological faults. Loch Ness (below left), for example, in the Great Glen Fault, is surrounded by stone circles

Below right: at the Carnac complex in Brittany, France, minerals and faults in the Earth's surface appear to cause subtle changes in gravity

produced. This may account for the ultrasonic measurements recorded by the Dragon Project (see page 1599).

When rocks are subjected to great pressure unusual atmospheric lights may be produced (see page 2305). Britain's fault areas tend to attract the highest incidence of UFO activity, and it has been proposed that UFOs are, in fact, 'earth lights' produced by seismic action. The evidence suggests that these lights, while probably closely related to phenomena such as earthquake lights and mountain peak discharges, possess special characteristics. One of the most important of these is the ability to *shapeshift*. Some British researchers believe that it is possible that these lights, composed of sensitive pockets of energy, are *consciousness-sensitive*, enabling their forms to respond to psychokinetic cues unconsciously generated by the human mind or brain. This is, at least, a testable theory.

Lights out of darkness

Ley hunters have long speculated that UFOs are related to leys. There is, in fact, almost no hard evidence to support this. But the association of particular types of *site* with geological regions prone to UFO incidence might be another matter. What we can be sure about is that if UFOs have appeared in the skies of our planet for thousands of years, then the ancient megalith builders would have been aware of them – mysterious lights appearing out in the darkness of a prehistoric night would not have been missed. If such lights haunted specific areas they would undoubtedly have been incorporated into the cosmologies of those ancient societies and it would be natural to expect that sacred sites would have been erected within such regions. There is a modern example of this, in the Lake Manchester area near Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. This area is said to have many manifestations of small globes of light that appear and disappear mysteriously. Local aborigines, apparently, consider these lights – which they call '*min min* globes' – to be spirits of the dead, and they have built a totem site in the vicinity.

Such reactions to natural phenomena are not rare among so-called 'primitive' peoples. It seems likely that the megalith builders would have reacted in a similar way – and surely it is not mere speculation to suppose that they would have taken careful note of such 'spirits', studied their behaviour and learned the laws relating to their manifestation. It is difficult to believe that such phenomena would not have left their mark on the religious, or shamanistic, practices of the day. By studying the remnants of the ancient megalithic societies, the marks they left in the landscape, it may be possible for us to learn more about a phenomenon that is as old as the Earth and yet may be one of the most remarkable and startling mysteries still unsolved on the planet.

Resting in peace

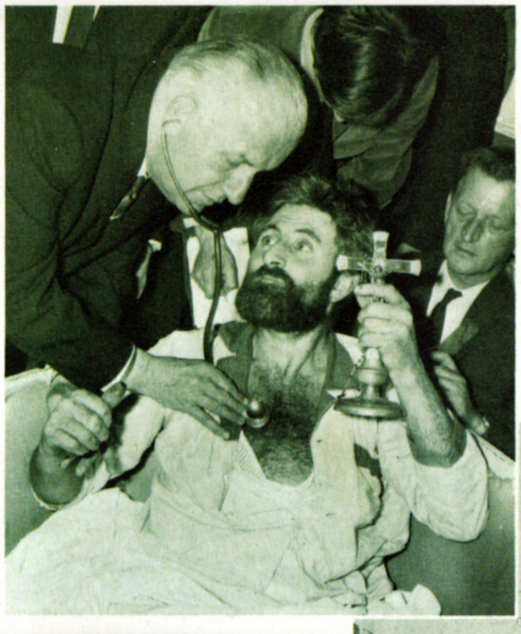
To most people the idea of being buried alive is pure nightmare. But some have perfected the art of staying buried alive for long periods – for fame and fortune, or even to gain enlightenment. BOB RICKARD looks at this curious way of passing the time

SOMETIME IN THE mid 17th century an astonishing incident occurred in the outskirts of Amritsar, in north-west India. Workmen, digging a ditch in a layer of brittle shale, found they had accidentally broken into an unsuspected tomb. Inside they found the dust-covered – and apparently mummified – body of a young yogi, sitting cross-legged in faded orange robes. They decided to bring the body to the surface and, so the story goes, when the Sun's rays first touched the body's dry skin, it began to change. The yogi gradually stirred and within a short time was talking to the workmen, seemingly not much affected by the ordeal of being buried alive. But he had an even greater shock to impart to his saviours. His name was Ramaswami, he said, and he had descended voluntarily into his tomb about 100 years previously.

Within a month news of the yogi's resurrection had spread far and wide in the subcontinent, and was taken by many Indians to be confirmation, if such were needed, of the reality of yogic powers. No one challenged Ramaswami, so universal was the belief in this feat. On the contrary, one famous historian, Arjun Singh, even journeyed to Amritsar to learn more of life in the previous century from one of its alleged former denizens. If Ramaswami was a charlatan, he was no ordinary one, because the historian came away impressed.

However, the story of Ramaswami, while providing the prototype for the phenomenon of living burials, is quite unsatisfactory as evidence. Further details are locked away in obscure publications in the Indian languages and are generally inaccessible to the Western researcher; and should one discover a reference it will almost certainly lack the kind of corrobative details that a Westerner would find convincing, partly because these have always seemed incidental to the Indian mind, preoccupied as it has been with philosophical or spiritual truths. Far more satisfactory are the records of a fakir called Haridas, who appeared in the Jammu region of India's north-west frontier in the late 1820s.

Haridas first came to prominence when Raja Dhyan Singh, a government minister, published a description of a four-month



burial endured by Haridas that he himself had witnessed. This was independently confirmed by at least one European doctor. When news of further triumphs in Jasrota and Amritsar reached the ears of the Maharaja of Lahore, an educated sceptic, he invited Haridas to his palace for a carefully controlled experiment. Several English doctors, and French and English military personnel were also invited, the latter being asked to scrutinise the proceedings.

According to a lengthy account in the *Calcutta Medical Times* in 1835, the doctors had immediately discovered that Haridas had cut away the muscles under his tongue so that it could be doubled back to seal off the nasal passages at the back of the throat. For some days before his immurement Haridas consumed only milk and yoghurt and bathed in hot water. Finally he fasted completely, and before all the witnesses performed several extreme yogic ablutions to clean out his alimentary canal, including, we are told, swallowing a 30-yard (27-metre) strip of linen and regurgitating it. He closed his nose and ears with wax – a defensive measure against insects – settled into a cross-legged position and rolled his tongue back. The physicians found that within seconds his pulse was undetectable. 'He was physically dead,' declared one.

The capacity of Indian yogis – or holy men – to endure even the most hideous self-inflicted pain without flinching (bottom, far left), and to alter their metabolism at will, has long been the stuff of travellers' tales. But the mystic East does not have the monopoly of mind over body. In 1968 Mike Meaney, an Irish barman from Kilburn, London, was buried in a wooden coffin for a record-breaking 61 days. As the coffin was lowered he was in exuberant spirits (left); when he was exhumed, in front of an enormous crowd (below left), he was pronounced by a doctor to be 'in excellent condition' (far left). Others aim to get above ground as fast as possible – in 1955 escapologist Derek Devero freed himself from his manacles and a mailbag underground in Pollokshields, Glasgow, in just five minutes (above)

As the barley sprouts above

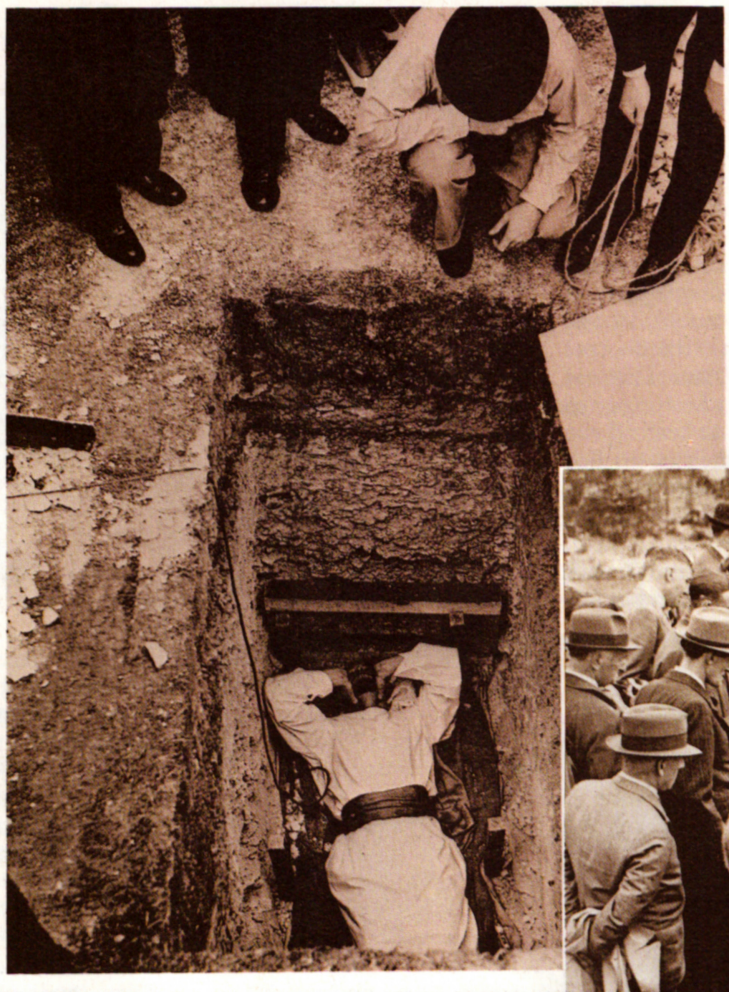
Haridas was wrapped in linen and placed in a large, padlocked chest, which was then sealed with the Maharaja's personal seal. The chest was buried and barley sown in the soil above it. Then a wall was built around the site and guards were posted around the clock. Forty days later the guests gathered again, this time to witness the fakir's unearthing. In the meantime, the barley had sprouted undisturbed, and the seal and locks had remained intact. Inside his shroud Haridas was found in the same pose.

According to one of the witnesses, Sir Charles Wade, the fakir had all the appearance of a dead man – his legs and arms had shrunk and were rigid, his head lolled on one shoulder, and there was no detectable pulse in arm or temple. Haridas was massaged all over for minutes before signs of life returned. Doctors pulled back his tongue, unbunged his nose and ears and inflated his lungs with bellows. He was back to normal within the hour. The Maharaja gave him a handful of diamonds; after that he was lionised and showered with gifts wherever he went – for a while. For despite performing several more times – without ever being proved a fraud – he was ignominiously drummed out of Indian high society for deflowering several of his female followers. He was never heard of again.

About a year after Haridas's successful performance at Lahore, there was a report in the *Indian Journal of Medical and Physical*

Live burials

In the 1930s the United States and Europe were treated to repeated demonstrations of live burials by three Egyptians, Tara Bey, Rahman Bey and Hamid Bey. While in England Rahman Bey effected various 'mysterious' feats under the auspices of psychical researcher Harry Price, including a live burial at Carshalton, Surrey, in July 1938 (right). Although he emerged in good condition some time later (below right) his 'miraculous' abilities were later shown to be only average tricks by Harry Houdini, who outdid every trick the Beys performed



Below: the appropriately named Lucky, a tomcat, was found in a sealed drain in Bristol in June 1982. Workmen had blocked the drain five weeks before – with Lucky in it. His only injury was a stiff neck. After a hearty meal he was able to pose with kennelmaid Joyce Alsworth for the press

Science of August 1836 of a similar burial, by an unnamed fakir, at Jaisulmer. It might have been Haridas, for he too 'stopped the interior opening of the nostrils with his tongue' and made similar yogic preparations. This fakir was sewn into a thick cloth bag and placed in a stone cell lined with brick, which in turn was sealed with stone slabs, bricked up and guarded night and day. At the end of a 'full month' he was removed from his tomb perfectly senseless – and his skin was so dry and shrunken that he seemed to be almost mummified. His teeth were jammed together so fast that an iron lever was needed to force them apart in order to administer a little water. Even so, he too was fully recovered in a few hours.

In the 1920s three self-styled Egyptians – Tara Bey, Rahman Bey and Hamid Bey – aroused considerable interest in their tour of Europe and the USA. They performed live burials attended by newsmen and physicians, and in the ground of the witnesses'

choosing. In what might be called the classic manner, they stopped their ears and noses with cotton, and consciously diminished their breathing and pulse rate. Tara Bey claimed this was achieved by willpower, together with pressure on 'certain' nerve centres in the head and neck and retraction of the tongue to the back of the throat. Recovery was aided either by the attentions of his assistants or through something akin to post-hypnotic suggestion. Despite achieving apparently genuine burials for short periods – for obviously they were not in the same league as Haridas – they were accused at every turn of trickery.

Houdini triumphs again

Their tour ended in a double disgrace. To scotch the rumours of fraud Rahman Bey agreed to lie in a coffin in the Hudson River, but for some reason came up after only 19 minutes, just a few minutes longer than the world record for breath holding. Harry Houdini saw his chance to expose the fakir as a fraud: using his own not inconsiderable powers of breath control, he spent one and a half hours in a steel coffin at the bottom of a swimming pool at the Hotel Shelton, New York. Tara Bey, too, was trounced, but by a Frenchman called Heuzé who was buried in an ordinary coffin for an hour. There was no need for mystical trances, he said, because by keeping absolutely still and breathing slowly there had been enough air.

It is easy enough to explain the burial feat by presupposing trickery, as openly advocated by the psychologist D. H. Rawcliffe in *Illustrated magic* (1931) – or as implied in Ottaker Fischer's speculation in the same work that fakirs must have dug concealed tunnels leading to hollow trees, or used coffins with false bottoms or sliding panels.

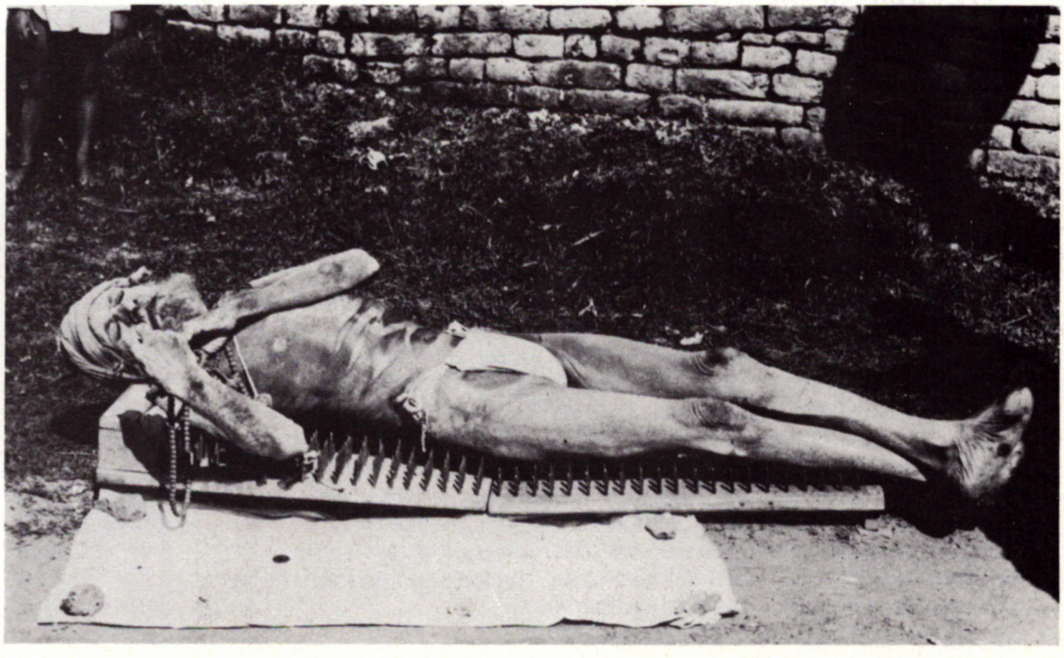
The fact that most of the mendicant jugglers and magicians calling themselves fakirs have been revealed to be cunning tricksters has not helped matters either. In 1955 the pioneering ufologist John Keel, then aged about 25, was a syndicated journalist drifting about India seeking out *jadoo wallahs* – performers of black magic and miracles. In his search for genuine mysteries, which was recorded in his first book *Jadoo* (1957), he saw very few and gradually became more cynical about the alleged accomplishments and motives of the self-styled 'living gods' and their ilk:

> Even though India is filled with tales about men who presumably equalled Haridas' performances, there is no solid record of them. Fakirs who tried the stunt afterwards were just imitators and they devised all kinds of tricks to do it. . . . More sincere holy men attempted the feat without trickery, and when they were dug up they were really dead.

These fatalities were so frequent that in 1955, while Keel was looking for someone to perform the feat for him, the Indian government was obliged to outlaw the practice.

But even the cynical John Keel found enough evidence to suggest that there were genuine fakirs with authentic powers – but they were solitary, secretive men who could not be found unless they wished it. This view had been confirmed by Louis Jacolliot, former Chief Justice in the then French Indies, who spent some time wandering through India in search of true fakirs. As Jacolliot explains in his *Occult science in India* (1884), he met several who, naked and without trickery or any kind of apparatus, demonstrated a variety of paranormal phenomena on demand.

If yoga is the means to the goal of *samadhi*, a superconscious state of union with the totality of existence, then the Islamic fakir and his counterpart, the Hindu *sadhu*, differ from more philosophical or spiritual yogis by



Right: an Indian fakir reclines on a bed of sharp nails, his emaciated body showing signs of previous self-torture. It seems that anything, from sticking knives in oneself to firewalking, is possible while entranced. The vital bodily functions can also be slowed until barely perceptible. It is under such conditions that yogis can remain underground for a considerable time

concentrating on the means and not the goal. Their aim is nothing less than mastery of their immediate existence by absolute control of their bodies, minds and psychic forces. This, they claim, can be accomplished only by years of gruelling discipline bordering on self-torture. This single-minded persistence pays off with conscious control of the body's autonomic nervous system, which governs our involuntary functions, and through which the adept can demonstrably control his pulse rate, breathing, sexual function, metabolism, kidney activity, body temperature and so on. This fine control would extend to involuntary muscle functions; another form of the yogic ablutions used by Haridas to cleanse his alimentary tract is the reversal of normal peristaltic motion so that water may be drawn up through the bowel and bladder.

In *The living brain* (1953) the neurologist Dr W. Grey Walter agreed that conscious control of autonomic processes would enable an adept to reduce his body 'to the state of an hibernating animal and can similarly be buried alive for days'. The comparison between the fakir's self-induced cataleptic state and animal hibernation was first proposed by James Braid, the physician who coined the term 'hypnosis', and the connection is clearly implied in the title of his *Observations on trance, of human hibernation* (1850), in which he discusses live burials. He concluded that yogis had perfected their control through the use of self-hypnosis, which released extraordinary subconscious powers.

This association with animal hibernation is an enduring and obvious one, and has engendered a splendid piece of American folklore, referred to by Ivan Sanderson in *Things* (1967), that from colonial times pioneer folk in the hard mountain winters would systematically chill their old folk in freezing draughts, then pack them in snow until the spring thaw. However, laboratory studies cited by Andrija Puharich in *Physiological psychology* (1950) show that although the yogi does indeed reduce his oxygen consumption and heartbeat, 'the two states are quite unlike.' For example, Puharich claims that in hibernation the basal metabolic rate is low and in yogic trance it is high; in hibernation blood sugar supply is much reduced whereas in yogic trances it remains more or less the same or can even rise. He concludes: 'Therefore, although trance and hibernation may appear to an outsider to be very much the same condition, they are, physiologically speaking, directly opposite conditions.'

Yet the fact remains that 'impossible' feats of suspended animation have been witnessed by many people of integrity over the centuries, in Africa as well as India.

Is suspended animation just a trick, or a proof of spiritual power? See page 2366

The buried fakir's self-induced cataleptic state seems to bear a resemblance to that of hibernating animals, such as the dormouse (above), or to the instinctive behaviour of some creatures, such as the Australian frog *Lymnodynastes ornatus* (right), that hide in the ground. Yet according to Andrija Puharich, the yogi's state is quite unlike that of a hibernating animal; for example, in hibernation the basal metabolic rate is dramatically lowered – but in trance it rises. Puharich summed up: 'they are, physiologically speaking, directly opposite conditions'

Have certain secret cults – based on Tantric sexual rites – found the key to eternal youth? KENNETH RAYNER JOHNSON investigates the amazing claim that these groups can prolong people's natural lives

THERE ARE MANY surviving branches of the occult order called the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), which has clear links with Tantra through the practice of sexual rites. There are also numerous claims to its leadership, the most valid of which in Britain is that of Kenneth Grant.

Although most Western writings on Tantra are somewhat vague on the subject of its inner mysteries, Grant's books – known as *The Typhonian trilogy* – go some way towards revealing and analysing the system. In these books, Grant unfolds some of the arcana underlying the symbolism of Left-Handed Tantrism as practised in the West.

The bodily centres of Shakti-yoga (see page 2331) are referred to both as chakra and as padma, or lotuses, the lotus being the mystical sacred flower of the Orient. In keeping with the Tantric use of the lotus as the symbol for the female genitalia, Grant interprets it as the 'flower, or flow-er; the flowing one that gathers together all the mystical essences, "stars", or *kalas* of the human body, and conveys them via the pudendum to the sacred leaf ready to receive them.'

Grant explains that the lotus, which is composed of these essences or secretions, 'flowers in the vaginal emanations that flow from the priestess'. These secretions are collected for use in the various magical rites and for the consecration of talismans. Having access to esoteric interpretations of Tantric ritual and practice, Grant quotes from an 'initiated comment on a sacred *tantra*':

> What is not (generally) known is that these secretions are not mere excretions but are valuable fluids which contain in themselves the secretions of the endocrine glands in a much purer form, and more fit for human use than the gland extracts and desiccated gland products of the present-day organotherapy. . . . The secretions of women are made in the laboratory of the Deity, the Temple of the Mother, and they supply just what is needed by the human . . . .
>
> Of the three kinds of fluids the urine is the least and the weakest; *rajas*, or menstrual secretion is next; and *bindhu* – the last, is a secretion not at present known to the West, and obtainable only by means of the *Shakta-Tantra* and their analogies in Mongolia, Tibet, China, Peru, Mexico and elsewhere; a fluid that bisexualises . . . and rejuvenates to an extraordinary extent.

The commentator goes on to say that at least 16 different types of bodily fluid from women are used in the Eastern Tantric system – the sixteenth, *sadhakya kala* (also known as the ray of the Moon), being the most secret. To

The lotus is the mystical sacred flower of the Orient, and the Tantrics use it to symbolise the unfolding of the self and the expanding of consciousness. It is also the Tantric symbol of the chakras, or psychic energy centres, of the human body. Used in this way, each petal signifies the blossoming of a special quality or mental attribute. The height of spiritual fulfilment is symbolised by a thousand-petalled lotus in the crown of the head

lend some support to these assertions, Grant cites Havelock Ellis, the pioneer sexologist. In his book *Studies in the psychology of sex*, Ellis says that only 14 of the bodily secretions known in Tantrism are recognised by Western science.

Exactly how the various 'essences' are obtained and applied, however, is not revealed. Nor are the precise results of their supposed effects. But there are indications that, in some way, they can retard or even halt the ageing process.

One highly secret group that would appear to have been successful in this technique is known as the Cult of Priapus and Ayana, which still functions in Britain, Europe and the United States. The cult was named after two ancient gods. Priapus was the ithyphallic god venerated by the ancient Romans, Etruscans, Greeks and Pompeians because of his overt fertility. His consort Ayana had three breasts. She was regarded as submissive to him.

According to the Roman author, merchant and traveller Lucius Marcellus, the cult's followers would present their daughters to the Temple of Ayana to be trained as priestesses. In return, they would be admitted to the inner sanctum where they were taught magical powers, including the secret of eternal youth.

The onset of Christianity and its persecution of pagan religions caused the cult to go into hiding, and it has remained underground ever since. Like the Tantrics, the Ayana cultists practise indiscriminate sex, incest and other forms of sexual rites considered to be morally degenerate. But despite the persecution of its adherents, the cult apparently survived and later spread.

One of the ways in which the cult stays secret is by dispensing with regular mass gatherings. Its aspirant priestesses are usually trained individually or in small groups of two or three by a priestess with whom they reside. The inner sanctum of the cult's various branches meet only twice a year, and always at different venues.

Kenneth Grant (above), writer and occultist, has the most valid claim to the British leadership of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO), which was founded in Germany in the early years of the 20th century. The sexual rites of the order link it to Tantra – and Grant has revealed some of the inner mysteries in a trilogy of books, of which *The magical revival* (above) is the first

The survival of the cult into comtemporary times was discovered in the late 1950s by an American occultist, James McNally. But McNally's discovery was quite by chance and, being a devout Christian, he was horrified at what he saw. Consequently, he uncovered little more about the cult and its activities. Another investigator, Justin C. Tanner, gleaned some additional information. He found that there were three temples of the cult in the United States, one in Denmark, one in Britain, and possibly others.

Yet another researcher, Arnold Weech, gained the confidence of the inner circle of the British temple and, in 1978, published a pamphlet of his assessment of the Cult of Ayana. He reported that he did not think the cult had any powers greater than those claimed by other occult groups he had encountered.

Counting the years

Weech did confirm, however, that the group appeared to have some powers to arrest the ageing process. In his opinion, a further 20 to 40 years could be added to the normal life expectancy, together with the retention of a youthful appearance. When he first encountered what he accepted ultimately as evidence of age retarding, Weech found it difficult to believe. He met a young girl who looked about 18 years of age and 'only after I had met her daughter and granddaughter (who did not possess this power) did I even begin to believe that such a power existed.'

Later, however, Weech met another member of the cult, a man who appeared to be in his mid-thirties, 'and by sheer chance I was able to check and completely confirm his claim that he was born before the turn of the century.' The man mentioned that he had served on HMS *Iron Duke* during the First World War. Weech happened to know a man in his home village who was an officer on the same ship at the same time and he arranged a meeting between the two – on the proviso that the officer would promise not to mention the encounter to anyone else afterwards.

> The meeting duly took place and within the first few minutes it became obvious that there could no longer be any doubt. They spent nearly five hours discussing old times and past events. The clincher came when our host produced a collection of photographs. One was of a gun crew standing in front of a gun turret, and there, smiling at the camera, with the same telltale scar on the point of the chin, and looking only a little younger, was the Cult member.

As a result of his investigations, Weech came

to the conclusion that initiates of the cult did have the power to arrest the ageing process, along with 'the ability to alter or change certain physical characteristics and develop mental powers to a very high degree, and one other power, which I have promised not to disclose'.

This secret power would appear to be some manner of ensuring that each member remains absolutely submissive to the cult and does not disclose its existence or secrets to anyone. According to Weech, the Cult of Ayana does not charge for membership, nor does it accept voluntary donations. Moreover, it does not actively seek new members and will not pander to the curious.

Would-be members have their life thoroughly checked before being admitted and, if any of the details they have given turn out to be false, they are rejected. Those who are admitted are put in touch with a mentor, who remains their only contact with the cult until the preparatory period is over. At this point, the candidate is then given the choice of joining – for life – or withdrawing.

The Elders of the sect have complete control and any member who offends an Elder is subjected to severe penalties, including corporal punishment.

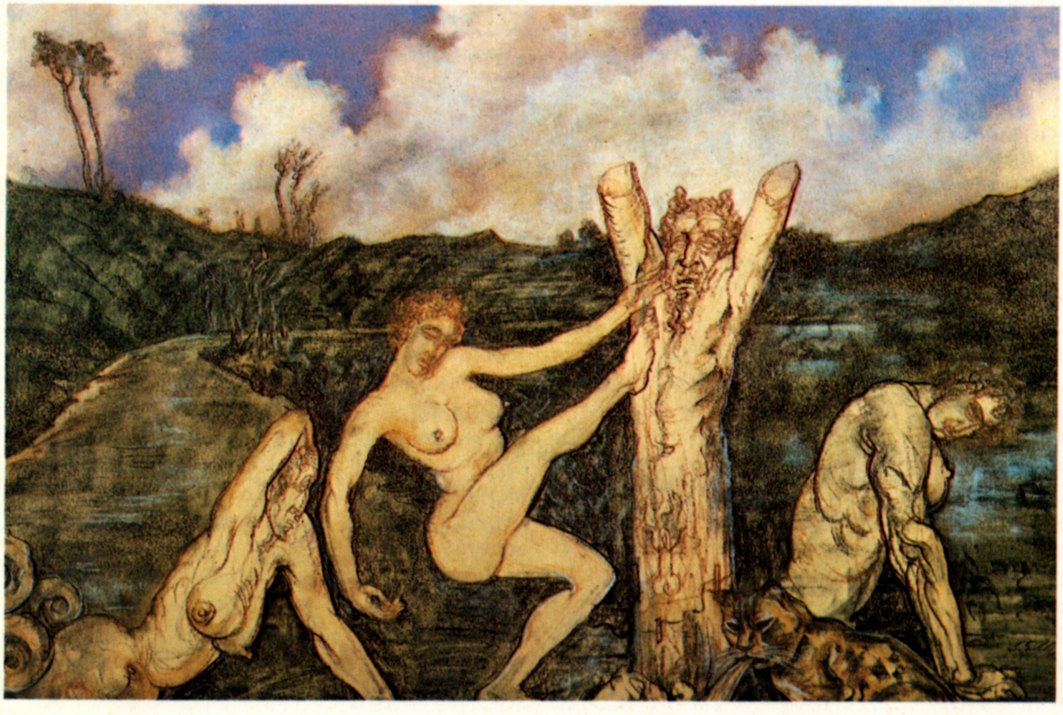
Weech states in his monograph that none of the members with whom he came in contact had any regrets. A young married man told him:

> We have literally to grovel sometimes. Our particular Elder has total power over us and can use us as he wishes, we can only obey. If he desires my wife, then he takes her and I have no say in the matter. Some of the ceremonies strip away all human dignity and yet we have no regrets. The diminishing of one's ego is a small price to pay for the priceless powers we now command.

In an attempt to investigate the cult further, the author contacted Magdalene Graham, editor of the quarterly *Occult World*, which originally published Weech's pamphlet. She said: 'Unfortunately, the Cult of Priapus and Ayana has now gone deep underground and severed all links with other organisations.' Asked if she believed the cult used Tantric methods to attain their age-retarding process, she replied: 'I should think it extremely unlikely that the Cult used Eastern methods as they . . . were extremely scathing of Eastern mysticism. They did state that they used sexual magic but, from the deliberate vague hints, it is obvious that this took somewhat unusual forms and probably consisted of acts which even in these "enlightened" times remain illegal.'

At one period, an occult group known as the Society of the Third Eye began to prepare a correspondence course, including a 'lesson' on the Cult of Ayana, but the sect subsequently asked that it be withdrawn. Magdalene Graham, who was involved in this project, reported: 'My personal contact with the real thing was of course via the Society of the Third Eye when we were preparing the lesson on P & A [Priapus and Ayana] for the Course, and I am sorry that I cannot give you any details of this, except to say that we required proof before attesting to their powers. . . .'

It is clear that there are cults in Britain, Europe and the USA today that practise sex magic that, they claim, endows their initiates with occult powers. Even if they deny the Tantric source, it is almost certain that the ancient cult of Tantra, based upon the symbolic union of the god Shiva and his consort Shakti, provided the initial impulse for such practices and beliefs.



Priapus disarmed, a painting by Austin O. Spare. Priapus was the ancient god of fertility, usually depicted with an enormous and erect phallus, and Ayana – the three-breasted goddess – was his consort. Members of the secret cult of Priapus and Ayana, which emphasises sexual rites of a Tantric derivation, are said to be able to halt the ageing process by their magical practices

Further reading

Arkon Daraul, *Secret societies*, Frederick Muller 1961

Kenneth Grant, *The magical revival, Aleister Crowley and the hidden god, Cults of the shadow*, Frederick Muller 1972–1975

Francis King, *Sexuality, magic and perversion*, Spearman 1971

Gopi Krishna, *Kundalini*, Robinson and Watkins 1971

Ajit Mookerjee and Madhu Khana, *The Tantric way*, Thames and Hudson 1977

Philip Rawson, *The art of Tantra*, Thames and Hudson 1973

Left: young girls of the Temiar Senoi, a Malaysian people for whom dreams are as important as waking life. The village shaman, for example, will learn in his dreams of the special tune by which a particular good spirit can be summoned – perhaps to overcome the bad spirit responsible for someone's sickness. Spirits are summoned at 'trance ceremonies'; these girls have decked themselves with flowers for one of these

Below: a young boy ready for the trance ceremony. If he wishes to become a shaman, he must have a dream in which he is 'adopted' by a spirit

Sleeping partners

Westerners, unlike primitive peoples, generally attach little importance to their dreams – most of which they forget. But, as JOE FRIEDMAN explains, dreams may be channels through which ESP 'messages' can be received

IN 1932 A BRITISH ANTHROPOLOGIST, Pat Noone, was exploring a remote area of the highlands of the Malay Peninsula. During his travels he made a first-hand study of a tribe called the Temiar Senoi. This tribe, in Noone's view, was extremely contented – he called them 'the happy people' in his letters. Their marriages lasted the lifetime of the partners involved, and there was no history of crime or violence within the tribe. Their children were happy and contented. Noone wondered what it was that made this tribe so different from the superstitious, fearful, and often violent tribes that inhabited the surrounding area. To discover this, he spent the rest of his life studying and working with them. He invited an American psychologist, Kilton Stewart, to share this work and contribute his professional expertise to it.

Noone discovered that the Senoi culture was largely based on the sharing of dreams. Every morning the extended family met over the first meal of the day to tell each other their dreams and discuss them. As soon as a child was able to speak, he was encouraged to tell his dreams. Through doing this and hearing his dreams discussed, he became more familiar with his inner world and that of others.

Pat Noone, a British anthropologist, described the dream life of the Temiar Senoi in the 1930s

All children have frightening dreams and nightmares, but the Senoi society is unique, as far as we know, in the way they teach their children to deal with them. If a Senoi child dreamed he was being chased by a large animal and woke up in terror, his father might urge him to turn and face his pursuer in another dream. If the animal was too large to be confronted by the child himself, he was encouraged to call on his brothers or friends to help him outface the animal in the dream. The nightmares would decrease and then stop altogether. The Senoi children struck up relationships with the figures in their dreams who had previously frightened them,

A dream group led by the author, Joe Friedman. By meeting regularly to discuss their dreams, just as the Temiar Senoi do each morning, the members of the group find themselves remembering dreams much more fully. They also discover more meaning in them – and, most remarkable of all, begin to find apparent telepathic and clairvoyant links among the dreams of different group members

and eventually these dream characters became helpful advisers.

The aspiring shaman, or healer-priest, would acquire a guardian spirit whom he would meet in a dream. At a special dance he would go into a trance and lead the village in dances taught him by the spirit, thus winning recognition as a shaman.

The Senoi believed that the inhabitants of their dreams were the spirits of animals, plants, trees, mountains and rivers. Through their friendship with these spirits, they believed they could learn things that they could never have known by means of the senses.

For example, one man, who had befriended the spirit of the river in his dreams, frequently had dreams telling him where he could catch large fish. When he went to this part of the river the following day, he caught the fish he had dreamed about. On another occasion, he dreamed the design of a new fish trap. He built a trap based on the dream design and found it worked very well indeed. Other men, whose spirit friends were of the animal kingdom, dreamed of the best places to go hunting in the forest.

Stewart also recorded evidence of much more obvious and powerful psychic phenomena in the Senoi's lives. On one occasion, when there was an epidemic in the tribe, a shaman had a dream in which his dead wife visited him. She taught him a dance, which she said would heal those in the tribe who were ill. In the dream, the shaman demanded some evidence that she was indeed his wife and not some other spirit impersonating her. She said that if the dance were performed correctly, she would cause a wooden box that was buried with her to appear in the middle of the long hut.

That night the tribe performed the dream-taught dance, and at the end of it a box appeared in the air and fell to the ground. A cold breeze swept through the hut. Those who were ill quickly recovered.

Stewart and Noone were sceptical of this account, combining materialisation and healing, and so they hypnotised the shaman concerned. Under hypnosis he recalled the story with only a few minor changes. It seemed to them that he was not guilty of any conscious sleight of hand – indeed he had been as surprised as anyone else when the box appeared.

Whether we believe this extraordinary story or not – and the value of the hypnosis evidence is highly questionable – it is just one of many from cultures that believe dreams can have a direct healing effect (see page 1852). Can such phenomena also occur in our own society? Can we too discover a psychic component to our dream lives?

In 1972 the writer began to lead groups that used the Senoi approach. Each week, a number of London adults would meet for one evening to share and discuss their dreams. These people, often strangers to one another before the group was set up, were aged between 20 and 50. Each week everyone would tell one dream they had had in the days since the group's last meeting. The group would then try to clarify the events of the dream and the accompanying feelings.

The shared dream

Although the main purpose of these groups was to help members come to understand their dreams, it was found during the very first session that various kinds of psychic phenomena seemed to be facilitated. The most obvious was the 'shared dream'.

For example, Bill described a dream in which he was standing within a semicircle with a magician, who reminded him of Tom, another member of the group. From the point where Bill stood, lines led to the letters of the alphabet. The magician told Bill that he was an 'H' or a 'K'. On the same night Tom had a dream in which he was working at a post office, sorting parcels alphabetically into different bags.

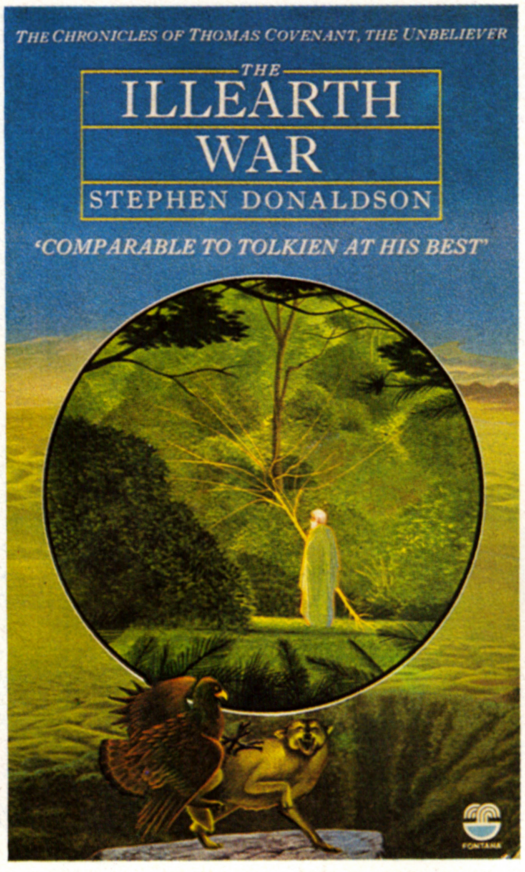
The correspondence here involved a person in Bill's dream who resembled Tom, assigning letters of the alphabet to Bill, while on the same night Tom was dreaming of sorting parcels according to the letters of the alphabet.

Sometimes one person's dream corresponded with some event in which another member of the group had been involved in the previous week. The following is a striking example.

Peter dreamed he was engaged in, or witnessing, a struggle between a scientist and the Devil. The Moon, which Peter could see out of the window, turned blood-red, became full and came speeding through the window, rushing with great force towards the man's face. To quote from Peter's dream diary:

The Moon had entered the man's head.

I knew the Moon was one of the Devil's



Left: elements from Stephen Donaldson's *The Illearth War* were apparently transmitted telepathically by a dream group member, Ron, as he slept. The 'receiver', Peter, dreamed of a struggle between a scientist and the Devil, and of the Moon turning blood-red. On the same night Ron had read, in Donaldson's fantasy, of the Moon turning blood-red and serving the 'king of evil'

> minions and here was the agent of possession. . . . I saw the man knocked against the wall. . . . Then a small patch of red light shone on the wall next to his right hand.

At that time, Ron, having had difficulty getting to sleep, had been reading a fantasy book called *The Illearth War* by Stephen Donaldson. The part in which he was engrossed concerned one Thomas Covenant as he made a final attempt to overthrow the power of the king of evil, Lord Foul. The power of Lord Foul was evinced by the fact that the Moon became blood-red and served as one of Lord Foul's minions.

In the dream, Peter saw a patch of red light on the wall next to the scientist's right hand. In the book, Thomas Covenant wears a white gold ring on his left hand. This ring begins to emit a red glow during the period of Lord Foul's ascendance. Peter had never read the book, nor had he any ordinary means of being aware that Ron was reading it at the time.

On certain occasions the kind of psi that emerges in a dream is not linked to the present but to a future event in the life of the dreamer or another member of the group. These precognitive dreams are often specific and accurate, and foreshadow events that are outside the control of the dreamer.

Yet we are normally unaware of dream ESP. There are three main reasons that could account for this. First, most of us do not usually remember our dreams. Scientific studies have established that each of us dreams four or five times a night. Yet few of us remember even one dream a week. Even this is rarely remembered in much detail for a long period.

Even when we do remember our dreams, we rarely make a record of them, and then we do not include very many specific details. And finally, even when we do remember and record our dreams, we rarely discuss them with others. If Bill had not been participating in a dream group he would not have told the dream to Tom, since they were not close friends, and thus would not have discovered that Tom had had a similar dream the same night.

On page 2378: how a long series of telepathic dreams was sustained

Right: recordings of a subject's brain waves are made while she is awake, to be compared with her sleeping brain activity. Such records show that certain types of brain activity are much the same during dreaming as during waking life. But dreams seem more conducive to ESP than waking life does – perhaps because when we are awake our awareness of ESP 'messages' is swamped by the profusion of our ordinary experiences

Post script

Your letters to THE UNEXPLAINED

Dear Sir,
As the investigator of the Newmill UFO sighting mentioned in Jenny Randles's article entitled 'Light through the window' in issue 84 of *The Unexplained*, I must point out some factual discrepancies in the story.

In the first place, while the object was moving at ground level and apparently confronting the witness, Caroline, it was green, not 'green and red'. It also seemed to be solid with some kind of appendage. As Caroline remarked, it appeared to be perched on top of something narrow, although its shape was indistinct.

It was not until the object had moved up into the sky above a nearby tree – which was judged to be less than a mile [1.6 kilometres] away – that it appeared as a sharply defined oval with red lights flashing inside it; the whole object zig-zagged about the sky. Meanwhile the second object, which appeared to be similar to the first, had appeared towards the north-west.

The original UFO was visible for about 30 minutes, the second for about two to two and a half hours.

Both of them appeared again on the following night (18 September 1977). There was possibly a third – but not four as stated in the article. And interestingly, in an apparently unrelated incident, a typical saucer-type UFO with an illuminated dome was seen not far away, on the Redruth bypass, that night.

Caroline's mysterious illness did not clear up in a week as suggested. In fact, her symptoms were wrongly diagnosed as appendicitis and her perfectly healthy appendix was removed, understandably causing considerable distress to Caroline and Peter.

I am not attempting to offer any explanation of this case, nor trying to slot the incident neatly into any fashionable category. As the investigator of the case I merely produced an unprejudiced report of the eyewitnesses' accounts, details of which can be found in *Flying Saucer Review*, volume 24, issue one.

After the Newmill sighting I made tentative – and, as it turned out, unfruitful – enquiries into the rumours of similiar incidents in the area. However, some witnesses are hard to interview, and concrete evidence was difficult to come by. But any further developments will certainly be made known wherever possible.

Yours faithfully,
Terry Cox Bodmin, Cornwall

Dear Sir,
I have a couple of points I would like to make that relate to your series of articles on Borley Rectory (starting in issue 93).

For 12 years I used to run a summer camp for boys in Essex and during that time I visited Borley on many a dark and gloomy night, usually with a party of young teenage boys. They found these trips most exciting – having, of course, heard all the legends surrounding the place.

We usually drove the 20-odd miles [approximately 30 kilometres] to the picnic site just outside Borley village, and then walked the remaining half mile or so [roughly a kilometre] up to the church. The time might be anything from 8.30 p.m. to midnight. We would point out the original site of the rectory and then walk round the churchyard. Then we would return to our car and go back to the camp.

Nothing paranormal ever happened, but the journey along that very atmospheric road was enough to cause the adrenalin to flow. On several occasions some of we helpers caused mild 'happenings' of our own, such as fake poltergeist activity or trance-like possession – just enough for the boys to enjoy a good scare. I distinctly remember one such occasion when, wearing a white monk's habit, I stationed myself with a colleague in a cornfield on the outskirts of the village, awaiting the arrival of that night's ghost-hungry party of boys. Three years later one of them recounted in graphic detail the story of how he had seen the phantom figure of a monk at Borley! I'm sure a good many alleged 'ghost' stories can be explained in that sort of way.

However, it was a very different story on a subsequent trip. This time we took a party of about six boys from our camp nearby. We drove straight up to the gateway of the churchyard. There was no time to create one of our fake 'atmospheres'; but on this occasion there was no need to do so – there was enough genuine atmosphere when we arrived. I was convinced there was something wrong immediately. The gate was ajar – there was nothing unusual in that – but that night somehow it seemed to be inviting us in. There were no night sounds at all; no crickets, no owls, no barking farm dogs, nothing. The unnatural silence was oppressive. In fact my colleague, remarking on the feeling of the place, described it as 'evil'. He left the car and walked on up through the village, the boys and I staying inside the car, making sure it was securely locked. When he returned he said that the normal night sounds had begun at the other side of the village. At this point we decided to leave – but the car refused to start. After a few moments of panic, it did start – and we left very hastily. My colleague said later that he had seen something like a disc hovering near our car, but had not mentioned it at the time for fear of alarming the boys.

There were at least two other occasions when colleagues of mine from the camp visited Borley at midnight on the anniversary of the alleged 'Nun's walk' – only to run into a witches' coven meeting in the graveyard.

We also visited Liston graveyard where, legend has it, the remains of a walled-up nun (or was it a monk?) lie buried. There was clear evidence that a grave had been desecrated. And although there was nothing to indicate the location of the nun's – or monk's – grave, we had heard a story that nothing would grow at the place. Sure enough, at the head of the desecrated grave stood the only completely dead tree in the graveyard.

I used to be quite sceptical about the Borley story, and your articles seem to have confirmed my scepticism. However, could it be that the church and graveyard are the real source of the ghostly phenomena allegedly connected with the place? I am not convinced that the entire Borley 'collection' of stories is pure fabrication.

Yours faithfully,
M.D. Baker Leicester

Send *your* letters to THE UNEXPLAINED, Orbis House, 20–22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

THE WORLD'S MYSTERIOUS PLACES – 43
Swallow Falls, Bettws-y-coed, Wales